

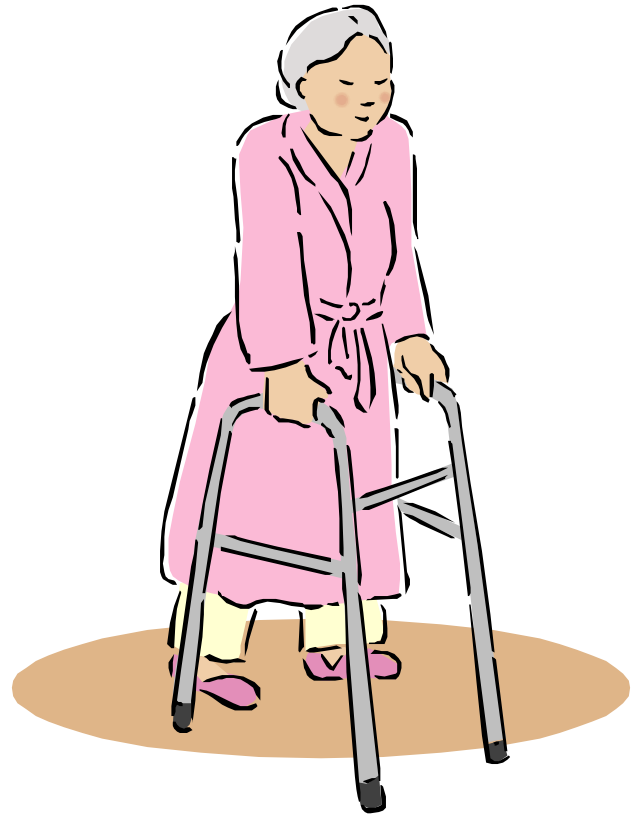


SAFETY CHECKLIST

- Remove all loose wires, cords, and throw rugs. Minimize clutter. Keep furniture in its accustomed place**
- Install grab bars and non-skid tape in the tub or shower.**
- Make sure halls, stairways, and entrances are well lit. Install a night light in your bathroom. Turn lights on if you get up in the middle of the night.**
- Install non-skid rubber mats near the sink and stove. Clean spills immediately.**
- Make sure the treads, rails, and rugs on stairs are secure.**

Preventing Falls

Common Causes, Conditions, and Risk Factors Associated With Falls



PATIENT/FAMILY
EDUCATION

More Section on Geriatrics consumer information is available at:

www.geriatricspt.org (click "Consumers")

American Physical Therapy Association
800/999-APTA

APTA consumer information:

www.apta.org/consumer

Find a Physical Therapist near you:

www.apta.org/findapt

Reference: *Guccione, A. Geriatric Physical Therapy*. 2nd edition. 2000: St. Louis; 280-291.





INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this brochure is to familiarize patients with physical conditions commonly associated with falls. A fall is clinically defined as “an unplanned, unexpected contact with a supporting surface”.

In the elderly population, falls often have devastating consequences. Falls can lead to loss of function and even death. It is important that patients understand the close relationship between mental and physical

impairments and falls. With aging, the risk for falls greatly increases. Thus, patients should be aware of factors that influence the risk for falls and ways in which falls can be prevented.



PHYSICAL CONDITIONS ASSOCIATED WITH FALLS

- Visual Deficits
- Muscle Weakness
- Impaired Balance
- Dizziness and Fatigue
- Acute Illness
- Dehydration
- Cardiovascular Impairment
- Seizures
- Vestibular Disease
- Poor Posture/Postural Control

RISK FACTORS

There is a significant increase in the risk of falling in people 64 and older. Women are at higher risk than men. Factors associated with falls are classified as intrinsic and extrinsic.

INTRINSIC FACTORS

- Being depressed/anxious
- Fear of falling
- Living alone
- Difficulty walking
- Confusion
- Reduced physical activity
- Reduced muscle strength
- Reduced stability while standing

EXTRINSINC FACTORS

- Stairs without railings
- Slippery surfaces
- Throw rugs
- Poor lighting
- Obstacles

